

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES IN LIMA
TRANSCRIPT

Ambassador Rose M. Likins
Press Availability on Wikileaks

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Benevolent Association of Officers of the Peru National Police
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AMBASSADOR: Good morning to all. Okay. I will first make some comments and then I will take your questions. First, we, the United States, think that the disclosure of the documents by Wikileaks is a crime. Our Attorney General has begun a criminal investigation in the United States, and we are confident that there will be legal consequences for the persons who participated in this crime. [Second] We are not going to speak about any document, not now nor ever, because we consider these documents still to be classified. It is protected information that we protect for good reason. Thirdly, I want to say that we regret very much that this has happened. Obviously it was not our intention, and we are not the ones divulging this information. Finally, our relationship with Peru is based on common objectives, on shared values. We are certain that this relationship will continue without problems as a result of what has occurred. And now your questions.

QUESTION: Has the United States government reacted late to Wikileaks? Because this is not the first time that these types of documents have been leaked. They've done this previously about Iraq.

AMBASSADOR: No, we have not been late. The person who was involved in this has been detained. There are legal proceedings that have already begun previously. The difference now is that they have published more information, and we have been attentive to this threat. And it really is a threat. The information, particularly in other countries, could cause the death of some persons who have shared information with our government. For this reason, we take it very seriously.

QUESTION: What is going to be the position of the United States in regards to the media that have...? Because they already have . . . and they have been publishing little by little. We're talking about countries like Spain, Japan, France, several countries

AMBASSADOR: This is an issue for the Attorney General of the United States. I cannot comment about this.

QUESTION: About the relationship with Peru, where it's been said that it will remain unchanged after the publication? Has this been raised with President Garcia? I imagine he touched on information, communications, about what could happen...some content that you say you won't comment on. But, has there been communication with, for example, the President on the issue?

AMBASSADOR: Yes, we have been in communication with the appropriate authorities.

QUESTION: And, the position of the United States with respect to Peru is that it [the bilateral relationship] remains unchanged whatever the contents of the documents are?

AMBASSADOR: Yes. Our relationship is based on the shared issues, such as support for democracy, shared fight against illicit drug trafficking, which we just spoke about upstairs in the seminar, the FTA [free trade agreement]. The things that unite us are much more important than whatever little scandal might result from this publication.

QUESTION: How many cables does Wikileaks have relating to Peru?

AMBASSADOR: I have no idea of what they have because they shouldn't have them.

QUESTION: The information on the Iranian minister is now public. It's the first information we have on the Peru file. Perhaps, there will be something on the maritime border case with Chile? Perhaps, some information exists?

AMBASSADOR: As I just said to you before I'm not going to comment on the documents. I'm not going to.

QUESTION: Will there be discussion with the Foreign Minister as soon as some information comes out?

AMBASSADOR: I, yes, I've had conversations with the appropriate authorities in Peru.

QUESTION: Several analysts on the topic have pointed out that, in reality, [U.S.] embassies in the world are centers of espionage. What is your opinion about this?

AMBASSADOR: The work of diplomats around the world in all nations is to get to know the countries to which we have been appointed. How do we do this? We do it by getting to know the people, by talking, by sharing, by traveling. This is our work.

QUESTION: But, supposedly they have received precise instructions from the U.S. central government with respect to each country. In Peru, they'd been given precise instructions for example on the election process of 2006 where it could be said there was an anti-system candidate, Ollanta Humala. It is also mentioned in a Wikileaks' document that there had been concern over an expansion of the Chavez model in Peru?

AMBASSADOR: Neither will I comment on this specific document as I have said. Our work, I repeat, is diplomatic work which consists of getting to know the countries to which are appointed and to transmit our perspective of life in another country to our headquarters in Washington. It is nothing bad. There is no bad intent. It is the professional work of diplomats.

QUESTION: Then, there was no type of interference in the last political process [campaign], nor there will be in the one that's coming up?

AMBASSADOR: No. We follow the democratic processes in the same way that all of you do. We observe what is happening, we participate in the national life as friends and partners of the countries to which we are appointed. But interference, never.

QUESTION: Do you think that, suddenly, all this information has come out, could it have negative consequences for the work of diplomats, taking into account that, as you mentioned, you make relationships with people to learn about the problems of a country, this will no doubt make things more difficult for the work of diplomats?

Ambassador: I hope not. I hope not. The relationship we have...we are very professional, and people know that what we want is to move forward and advance our relationship. So, I hope not. Thank you everyone.

(Press availability ends)